May 1, 2009

2008 Exit Survey Executive Summary

The Teachers College Exit Survey was designed in 2006 to solicit graduating students' feedback, first, on what they value most highly in the educational environment, and, second, on how well the College or individual programs meet students' expectations. The current version of the survey includes 64 statements about five areas of the educational experience— academic programs, instruction, academic advising, learning environment, and resources. Survey participants are asked to rate each statement on the importance scale from scarcely important (1) to very important (4) and on the agreement scale from disagree strongly (1) to agree strongly (4). In 2007, 523 students completed the survey (30% response rate); in 2008, we received 373 completed surveys (23% response rate).

Student Priorities 2008

The statements that were rated as very important by at least 70% of respondents were identified as student priorities. In 2008, there were 22 such statements. The list of the 22 statements is presented in the table on the right. Most of the student priority statements related to academic programs, academic advising, and learning environment. None of the statements from the instruction and resources categories made it to the 2008 student priority list.

The percentages of respondents who agreed or agreed strongly with the priority statements show that the majority of respondents (60%-91%) were satisfied with the quality of their educational experience. A simple comparison reveals that respondents were more satisfied with the quality of their learning environment (80%-91%) than with that of academic programs (74%-87%) or academic advising (60%-79%).

Statement	% Very Important	% Agree
A good variety of courses was offered by my program.	70	74
Courses were offered frequently enough that I was able to complete my degree requirements as planned.	73	78
Course content was applicable to my anticipated work in the field.	78	81
Program requirements were relevant to my anticipated work in the field.	73	80
My internship experience contributed to my academic development.	82	80
I got to apply what I learned in my courses to real-life situations during my internship.	80	80
I got to practice a variety of professional skills during my internship.	79	84
My supervisor guided me during my internship.	72	76
My internship/field placement site was conducive to my learning and professional development.	79	87
I received accurate information about program and degree requirements.	70	76
Program and degree requirements were clearly explained to me.	74	70
I knew what I had to do to meet program and degree requirements.	74	79
My program provided good academic advisement.	72	60
My academic advisor was knowledgeable about program requirements.	72	74
My academic advisor was approachable.	75	79
My program faculty cared about professional welfare and development of students	71	80
My program faculty were scholarly and professionally competent.	78	91
My program was an intellectually stimulating place.	77	84
My program was free of discrimination with regard to gender, race, creed, national origin, age, disability status, sexual orientation, and marital status.	73	86
My program faculty treated students with respect.	79	91
My program faculty treated all students fairly.	79	85
My program faculty were fair and unbiased in assessing/ grading student work.	78	90

Performance Gaps: Strengths and Challenges

We adapted Noel-Levitz's approach to identify the areas of strengths and challenges. Student responses to each of the 64 statements were averaged to produce an importance score and an agreement score. A performance gap was calculated by subtracting the agreement score from the importance score. A larger performance gap indicates that the College or programs do not meet student expectations; a smaller performance gap indicates that the College or programs do a relatively good job of meeting expectations.

Strengths

Strengths were defined as the statements that were rated as very important by at least 70% of respondents and had a performance gap of 0.2 or smaller. The following strengths were identified by our respondents in 2008:

- My program faculty were scholarly and professionally competent.

- My program was free of discrimination with regard to gender, race, creed, national origin, age, disability status, sexual orientation, and marital status.

- My program faculty treated students with respect.

- My program faculty were fair and unbiased in assessing/ grading student work.

The College and programs met or were close to meeting student expectations in the following areas as well (medium importance and small performance gap):

- Course content provided me with a solid theoretical background.

- My program faculty were open to discuss different scholarly points of view.

- Students of diverse backgrounds and different experiences were encouraged to participate in class.

- Class activities/assignments encouraged reflection and critical thinking.

- My program helped me to develop the ability to accept people with different values and beliefs.

> **We are planning to make revisions to the questionnaire after the 2009 administration. If you have any suggestions, please let us know.**

Challenges

Challenges were defined as the statements that were rated as very important by at least 70% of respondents and had a performance gap of 0.5 or larger. The following challenges were identified by our respondents in 2008:

- A good variety of courses was offered by my program.

- Courses were offered frequently enough that I was able to complete my degree requirements as planned.

- Course content was applicable to my anticipated work in the field.

- Program requirements were relevant to my anticipated work in the field.

- I got to apply what I learned in my courses to real-life situations during my internship.

- My program provided good academic advisement.

- I received accurate information about program and degree requirements.

- Program and degree requirements were clearly explained to me.

- I knew what I had to do to meet program and degree requirements.

- My academic advisor was approachable.

- My academic advisor was knowledgeable about program requirements.

- My academic advisor helped me to complete my program as planned.

- My program faculty cared about professional welfare and development of students.

Academic Programs

Eight of the 18 statements related to the area of academic programs were on the 2008 student priority list. The statements about variety and frequency of courses offered by programs and applicability/relevance of course content or program requirements to the world of work showed large performance gaps, indicating that the College and programs did not meet respondents' expectations. On the other hand, three high importance statements related to internship experiences had performance gaps of 0.3, indicating that the College and programs did a better job in providing clinical

experiences as part of the academic programs. The gaps are shown graphically on the right: the top of each vertical bar represents the importance scale mean score, the bottom of each bar represents the agreement scale mean score.

Although not on the priority list, respondents' expectations regarding the quality of theoretical preparation, clarity of program philosophy, and the academic rigor of required courses were close to being met. On the other hand, program design as defined by a set of well-integrated and non-repetitive courses needs further attention to meet students' expectations.

Academic Advising

Nine of the 10 statements in the area of academic advising had performance gaps of 0.5 or larger, making the whole area of academic advising a challenge area for the College and programs. Seven of the 10 statements were on the student priority list. The general statement about quality of academic advising and two statements about accuracy and clarity of information provided to students had performance gaps of 0.7-0.8, some of the largest gaps in the questionnaire.

Although not on the priority list, respondents' expectations about quality of student support services were far from being met, with a performance gap of 0.6. Finally, the College and programs need to better monitor students' progress toward degrees to meet respondents' expectations.
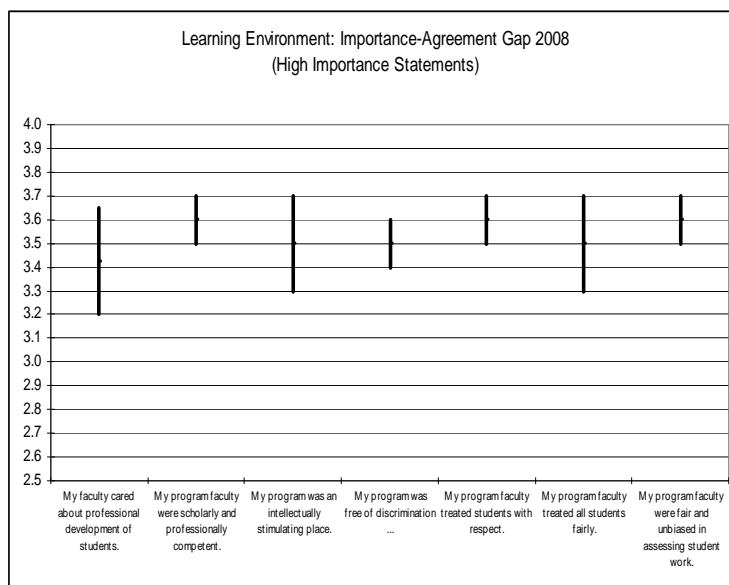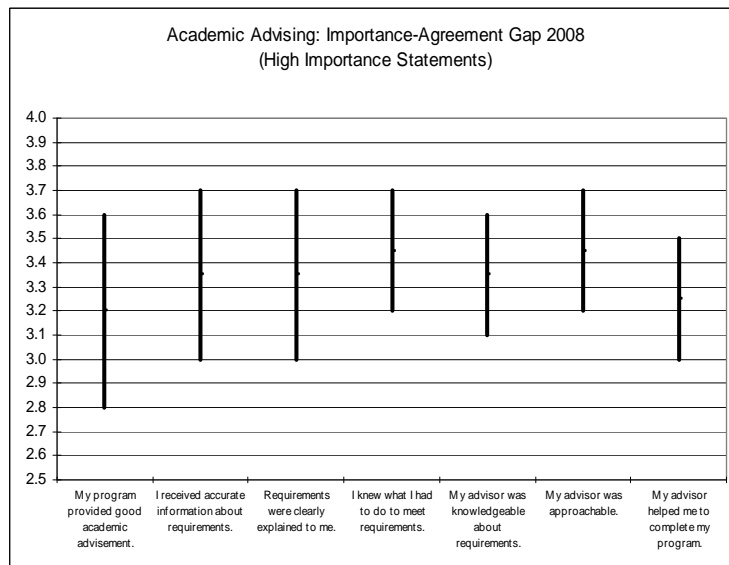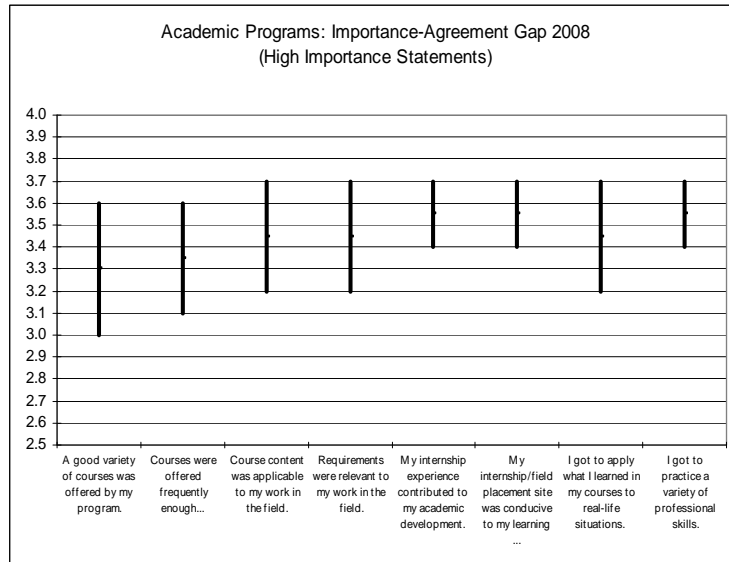
Learning Environment

Seven of the 18 statements related to the area of Learning Environment were among students' priorities. Only one of these statements—"My program faculty cared about professional welfare and development of students"—was a challenge, as indicated by a 0.5 performance gap. Four statements with small (0.2) performance gaps represent TC and program strengths.

While not on the priority list, respondents' expectations regarding quality of fellow students, student support for each other, and collaboration between students and faculty were close to being met. The four statements in the area of Learning Environment with performance gaps of 0.5 or larger (three are not on the priority list) related to faculty and program concern about students' needs and receptivity to students' input.

Finally, all statements related to diversity and non-discrimination (including diversity of faculty and students, non-discriminatory and fair treatment of all students, and encouragement of open discussion) had

Academic Programs: Importance-Agreement Gap 2008 (High Importance Statements)

Academic Advising: Importance-Agreement Gap 2008 (High Importance Statements)

Learning Environment: Importance-Agreement Gap 2008 (High Importance Statements)

Learning Environment (continued)

small performance gaps, indicating that respondents' expectations were close to being met. All statements about diversity and discrimination ought to be considered with caution given the smaller proportion of minority respondents. In 2008, 8% of respondents were African American, 9.1% Latino/a or Hispanic American, 1.4% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 14.4% Asian, and 62.4% White. The results of the ANOVA analysis comparing means on the composite diversity scores in 2007 and 2008 reveal that there was a significant difference between White and non-White respondents—White respondents tended to evaluate diversity more positively than did non-White respondents.

Instruction

Surprisingly, the area of instruction was not of high importance to respondents. None of the questionnaire statements in the area of instruction was rated very important by at least 70% of respondents and none had a performance gap of 0.5 or larger.

Respondents' expectations regarding appropriateness of class activities and assignments and encouragement of reflection and critical thinking were close to being met (0.1-0.2 performance gaps). Their expectations regarding a variety of assessment methods, faculty use of technology, and opportunities to practice research skills were met as indicated by a no-statistically-significant-difference finding in the gap analysis. Respondents' expectations regarding encouragement of teamwork and collaboration were exceeded as indicated by a gap of -0.2.

Finally, respondents expected a somewhat better performance from the College or programs in regard to faculty teaching styles, timeliness and helpfulness of feedback provided, and preparation to work with diverse children and/or adults (0.3-0.4).

Resources

None of the statements in the area of resources was rated very important by at least 70% of respondents in 2008. An almost 20% drop in importance of financial aid from 83% in 2007 to 64% in 2008 is puzzling. The data from the 2009 survey administration, which is currently underway, may provide more information on the nature of this change. In any case, the statement about the availability of financial aid had the largest performance gap of the entire questionnaire—1.2 in 2008 (and 1.7 in 2007).

Library resources and services were rated as very important by 62% of respondents. The performance gap of 0.2 indicates that the College has done a good job in meeting respondents' expectations in this area. Although not on the priority list, the statement about adequacy of classroom facilities had a performance gap of 0.7 indicating that respondents' expectations were far from being met. The College and programs did a relatively better job meeting respondents' expectations regarding specialized facilities and equipment (e.g., laboratories, studios, etc.) and technological resources (0.3-0.4 gap).